

David was in genuine trouble when he longed for the wings of the turtle-dove. His throne was in peril, and a host of his subjects were in insurrection under his scoundrel son Absalom. The post of duty with him was the post of danger. If he had deserted it in ignominious flight his troubles would have flown with him; and new ones would have met him. That was really a very weak and cowardly prayer. He might better have asked for divine strength to stand firm as a rock against the storm. It is usually a display of moral cowardice when we run from a hard place to an easy one or from a dangerous post to a snugly sheltered one. The Luthers, the Lincolns and the Livingstones were not made of such pulp. And in humbler stations, it is true that most lives which turn out a failure do it from the simple lack of moral courage.

There are thousands who ought to know better who yet repeat David's piteous cry when they are brought under heavy pressure. When the rod of divine chastisement makes them smart, or a load of worries is chafing them, they long for the dove-wings to carry them away; they hardly know where, so that it be out of the reach of the rod or the worry. Selfishness or unbelief whisper, *Run!* God's voice says, *Stand still,* and I will be with thee. Sometimes a swarm of cares light on us like stinging insects. Disappointments and mishaps befall us. As if these were not enough, we borrow fresh troubles from the morrow, and anticipate still worse things to come. Under this sharp strain, both faith and fortitude often give way, and we cry out in a sort of desperate discontent: "Oh, for wings to fly away and be at rest!" This is very natural, and yet it is very disgraceful to our religion. "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him." "Whom I love, I chasten." "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers trials; knowing that the trial of your faith worketh patience." These are God's messages to us, and if we know what is for our good we will heed them.

Perhaps the reader of this article may be now passing thru some sharp ordeal. You are tempted to run away from school because your Heavenly Father is giving you some hard lessons to learn. Perhaps you are in the "fining pot" of trial, and the furnace burns very hot. Remember that gravel stones are never put into crucibles, but gold and silver are; and, if you are allowed to have your own way, the dross and "slag" will not be purged out of your Christian character. "Hold still," says the surgeon to the wounded soldier; "when the bullet is out, you will feel better." God may be using his lancet on you. Running away might bring temporary relief—but not permanent cure. Keep still till God has got thru with his faithful, loving surgery; for it is not the escape from discipline, or the rebellion against it, that makes a Christian strong. God is doing just right; and "the effect of righteousness shall be quietness and confidence forever."

Oh, that every restless spirit would learn

that losses are often gains, and hindrances are often helps; that many a humiliation is intended to exalt, and many a cross is indispensable to the winning of the crown. We are often advanced by being hedged in, or turned back from the way of our own choosing. "When I am weak then am I strong," said the grand old man who never asked for an easy berth. So let us all be done with praying for dove's wings, and pray for grace to stand bravely at our posts, and to submit quietly to God's orderings. It will be time enough for the flight of the dove when the toil and the battle are over, and the door of our Father's house stands open to give us an eternal rest.

Brooklyn, N. Y.

#### "The Living God"

George Muller.

How many times we find this expression in the Holy Scriptures. And it is just the very thing we are practically prone to lose sight of. We know that it is written, "the living God;" we may speak about him as "the living God;" but in our daily life there is scarcely anything we practically so much lose sight of as the fact that God is "the living God," and that he is now whatever he was three thousand or four thousand years ago; that he has the same sovereign power, the same saving love toward those who love and serve him as ever he had, and that he will do for them what he did for those two thousand, three thousand, four thousand years ago, simply because he is in "the living God," the unchanging One, the same as ever he was.

O how, therefore, we should confide in him, and in our darkest moments and in our greatest trials and in our heaviest difficulties and afflictions should never lose sight of the fact that he is still "the living God," and ever will be "the living God!"

### The Sunday School

#### LESSON FOR SEPTEMBER 17.

(Editorial)

##### Power Thru the Spirit.—Zechariah 4: 1-14

1 And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep.

2 And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick, all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof:

3 And two olive-trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof.

4 So I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, What are these, my lord?

5 Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord.

6 Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.

7 Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace, unto it.

8 Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, saying,

9 The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto you.

10 For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven; they are the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro thru the whole earth.

#### Introduction

Zechariah the prophet had a series of visions, the fifth of which is the basis for to-day's lesson. The purpose of this vision was to encourage the fainting hearts of the people, and this was done by showing that they succeed, not thru human, but divine power. The work was the Lord's and not dependent on their own strength and resources.

#### The Text Explained

Verse 1. The same interpreting angel that was with him in all these visions. This was the beginning of a new series of visions. He had slept after the first series. See 1: 9, 13, 14, 19; 2: 3; 4: 4, 5; 5: 10; 6: 4. The angel now aroused him out of his ecstatic absorption after the previous vision.

V. 2. The angel calls his attention to the new vision which was opening. The word used for "candlestick" is the same as that used to describe the candlestick of the tabernacle, which too was of pure gold, and worth according to our calculation about \$25,000. The "bowl" was the reservoir from which the oil was supplied to the lamps. Seven being a number of perfectness, the seven pipes to each lamp would indicate the bountifulness of the supply of oil.

V. 3. These olive trees suggest the source of the supply, the oil usually burned in these lamps being olive oil. The figure represents the supply of oil without human agency, and the whole vision is meant to show that without human interference God would carry on the work of building the temple. The church is God's candlestick, the Holy Spirit the oil, a never failing supply. This candlestick is not to be put under a bushel, but its light is to shine, as a city set on a hill.

Vs. 4, 5. The prophet did not understand the meaning of the vision, but the angel was present with him to explain its meaning. The prophet was to reveal the vision to his people, and it was necessary that he should have the angel's authority.

V. 6. The people met with so much opposition in the building of the temple, there were so many difficulties in the way that they became discouraged. The Lord teaches the prophet that it is not a work of human hands, not human power or might. It was by the Spirit of the Lord that the work would succeed. Properly understood the vision was full of encouragement to the prophet, and the lesson is no less for us than it was for him. God's mighty work in the world has always been done by a few people filled with the Holy Spirit, with courage, perseverance and consecration. With such leaders the work will move forward.

V. 7. The figure of the mountain is to